

THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

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DOCKET NO. 15907

MOBILE AGENCY SERVICE VIA SEABOARD COAST LINE RAILROAD COMPANY OUT OF  
PORT ROYAL, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO VARIOUS AGENCY AND NON-AGENCY STATIONS.

ORDER NO. 16048 ✓  
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J. R. Davis for Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company, applicant.

Frank Baldwin, Irvin Floyd, J. W. Matthews, Larry Mintz, Joe Oliver, William A. Smith and Henry C. Stewart for various protesting interests.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

BY THE COMMISSION:

By application dated October 15, 1971 Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Company requested authority to implement a mobile agency concept in the Port Royal area, with Port Royal as the base station, to serve the following agency and non-agency stations:

Agency	Non-agency	
Green Pond - Ashepoo	Okeetee	Gray Hills
Ridgeland	Talco	Long Bellamy
Hardeeville	Coosawhatchie	Angle Siding
Burton	Kress	Roseida
Beaufort	Sheldon	Pritchard
Lobeco *	Coosaw	Levy
	Seabrook	Jasper
		Cooler

\* Except during perishable season when a fixed agent will serve during the approximate six-week season each year.

Protests were filed by Hardeeville and Ridgeland interests, and the matter came on for hearing before the Commission February 3, 1972 pursuant to notice thereof posted by applicant at each station involved, published by applicant in local newspapers in the area, and by notice mailed by us to protestants of record for whom we had complete mailing address.

With Port Royal as the base station for the proposed route, the mobile agent would operate from Port Royal Monday through Saturday, through Beaufort to Lobeco; thence to Green Pond and Ashepoo; thence back through Green Pond to Ridgeland and Hardeeville; thence returning to Port Royal. Okeetee, Talco, Coosawhatchie, Kress, Sheldon, Coosaw, Seabrook, Gray Hills, Long Bellamy, Angle Siding, Roseida, Pritchard, Levy, Jasper and Cooler, all presently non-agency stations, would also be served by the mobile agent and base control center, although the Railroad's studies establish that service at most of these non-agency points would be required only infrequently. The routing of the service is designed to coordinate it with the local freight train service.

The mobile agent would call upon the Railroad's patrons at their offices or plant at each of the points served and would prepare bills of lading, furnish advice on car supply, routing of traffic and all other agency services. The agent would be in constant two-way radio

contact with the base station at Port Royal, which will be open 11 hours per day, 5 days per week, and 8 hours on Saturday. Applicant has arranged for a public telephone system so that all customers in the area served by the mobile agent can reach the base station by toll-free telephone.

Applicant made a study of the volume of work being done at each of the agencies involved, for the fiscal year ended May 31, 1971, which showed they prepared an average of 4.1 waybills per day and approximately 88.4 per month or 1,061 per year. This waybill study does not include seasonal perishable traffic at Lobeco where a fixed agent has been, and will continue to be, maintained during that season. Of the 1,061 waybills prepared per year, 481 were for either wood chips, pulpwood or stumps, and these waybills are said to be of a repetitive nature requiring little time for a trained agent to prepare. The number of waybills retired averaged approximately 7.0 per day, but under present day rail practices in conjunction with handling of inbound traffic very little work is now associated with retiring waybills. The proposed service route involves driving approximately 132 miles per day, which applicant estimates will take approximately 3 hours and 40 minutes, leaving 4 hours and 20 minutes of working time, said to be more than ample, to handle the number of documents per day which the station agents are now handling.

Protestants appearing at the hearing included two patrons of the Railroad; representatives of the Hardeeville and Jasper County Chambers of Commerce; a representative of the Business Men's Association of Ridgeland; a member of the Jasper County Legislative Delegation; and a representative of the rail labor organization. The protesting patrons of the Railroad prefer to have agency service as now performed by the Railroad, stating that it has proven satisfactory for their needs, and expressing doubt the proposed mobile service will be equally satisfactory. The Chamber of Commerce and Business Men's Association representatives indicated they were not themselves patrons of the Railroad, but were appearing as officials of their organizations in behalf of their membership generally, and on the premise that substitution of mobile for fixed agency service will discourage industrial and commercial development efforts in the area. Prior to the hearing, we received a number of letters from shipping interests in the area, expressing either no objection to the proposal or a willingness to give it a try for a six-months trial period.

Three mobile agency services are now in operation in our State; one out of Sumter (SCL), another out of Blackville (SOU), and another out of Greenwood (SOU). All reports reaching us, as well as our own on-the-ground investigations of them, indicate that rail patrons are highly pleased with the service. Some protestants in the Sumter case have since written us, on their own, that the service is better than ever. We see no reason to expect any different reaction from authorization of the service proposed herein.

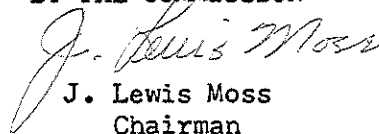
Accordingly, the application here involved for authority to implement mobile agency service out of Port Royal to various agency and non-agency stations, as hereinbefore set forth, is approved on a six-months trial basis, subject to our unannounced on-the-ground checking during that time, to become effective on or after April 1, 1972, and subject to our further order; and

It is SO ORDERED, this 6th day of March, 1972.

Attest:

  
J. D. West, Admr. Asst.

BY THE COMMISSION

  
J. Lewis Moss  
Chairman